

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about GRS 5.3, Continuity and Emergency Planning Records

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### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. What is the purpose of GRS 5.3?

This schedule provides disposition authority for records about Federal agency internal emergency planning to protect people, government facilities, equipment, and records; safeguard classified or sensitive information; ensure continuity of agency operations in the face of potential natural and man-made disasters; and facilitate timely recovery and return to normal agency operations once the emergency or disaster has passed.

#### 2. Whom do I contact for further information about this schedule?

You may contact NARA's General Records Schedules Team at [GRS\\_Team@nara.gov](mailto:GRS_Team@nara.gov) with questions about this schedule.

### CHANGES FROM THE OLD GRS

#### 3. How does GRS 5.3 differ from the old General Records Schedules?

GRS 5.3 replaces emergency planning items that were previously found in GRS 18. It clarifies that Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning records are part of emergency planning and updates the GRS to reflect how this business process is currently being carried out in Federal agencies.

The other significant change is that we have removed the requirement that agencies schedule as permanent emergency plans and emergency planning reports of operations tests (consisting of consolidated or comprehensive reports reflecting agency-wide results of tests conducted under emergency plans). These records were originally appraised as permanent in 1981 as documentation of emergency planning programs in agencies. Agency emergency planning, however, is a routine, administrative activity that generally does not result in permanent records. As indicated in Note 1 to item 010, an agency may submit a schedule for these records if it believes they warrant permanent preservation, especially in cases where plans were acted upon.

#### 4. Why is NARA rescinding GRS 18, items 29a and 29b, National Defense Executive Reserve (NDER) case files?

The National Defense Executive Reserve (NDER) program was administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA informed us that this program is defunct and no agencies have open NDER programs. As agencies no longer create or maintain these records, we are rescinding these items.

### DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THIS SCHEDULE

#### **5. What is “Continuity of Operations (COOP)”?**

COOP is an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs) continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies. COOP is defined in the National Security Presidential Directive-51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-20 (NSPD-51/HSPD-20) and the National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan (NCPPI). See <https://www.fema.gov/guidance-directives>.

#### **6. What is the relationship of COOP to emergency planning?**

COOP is a part of overall emergency planning. Emergency planning in Federal agencies also includes other types of emergency plans. Item 010 lists the following other types of emergency plans: Devolution Plans, Occupant Emergency Plans (OEP), Emergency Action Plans (EAP), Facility Emergency Action Plans (FEAPS), Records Emergency Plans (REP), Disaster Recovery Plans (DRP), and Pandemic Influenza Plans.

#### **QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 010**

#### **7. In the disposition instruction, what is meant by “whichever is applicable”?**

The statement “whichever is applicable” in the disposition instruction means to use whichever trigger is more appropriate for the records. Thus, if the records do not become superseded or obsolete, they should be destroyed when 3 years old. However, if the records do become superseded or obsolete, they should be destroyed 3 years after that point.